

TWO-TIME NEWBERY MEDALIST

ERIN ENTRADA KELLY

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

THE SECOND LIFE of SNAP



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ABOUT THE BOOK

Who wants a robot? Not twelve-year-old Zuzu, who lives with her father, Beany, in a poor Texas community some time in the future. Unlike people in nearby wealthy Bountiful, Zuzu and her friends in Barren live in worn-out trailers and barely have enough to eat, much less technology to make life easier. When Beany brings home Snap, an outdated “guardian robot,” Zuzu foresees a dull summer of Snap tutoring her instead of having adventures with her best friends, also known as the Valleycats. But surprisingly, Snap transforms from a piece of machinery into someone who wants to be a Valleycat, too. And when the Valleycats face dangers from a violent dust storm, the hazardous dump where they salvage, and even from the oppressive powers that rule Barren, Snap turns out to be exactly the friend they need.

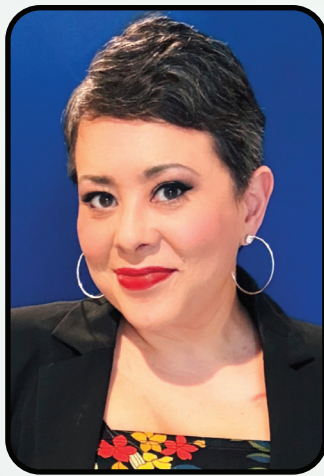


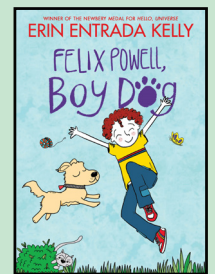
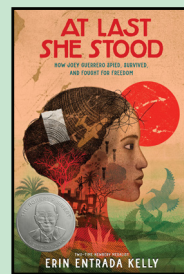
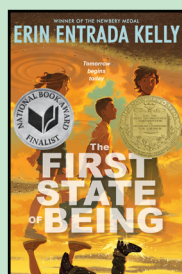
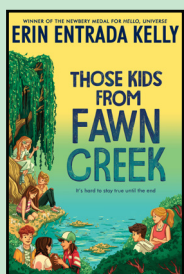
Photo courtesy of the author

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erin Entrada Kelly is the author of the Newbery Medal-winning novels *Hello, Universe* and *The First State of Being*, which was also named a finalist for the National Book Award. She received a Newbery Honor for her acclaimed novel *We Dream of Space*. Erin Entrada Kelly grew up in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and now lives in Delaware. She teaches in the MFA in writing for children and young adults program at Hamline University. Her short fiction has been nominated for the Philippines Free Press Literary Award for Short Fiction and the Pushcart Prize. Before becoming a children’s author, Erin Entrada Kelly worked as a journalist and magazine editor and received numerous awards for community service journalism, feature writing, and editing from the Louisiana Press Association and the Associated Press.

Erin Entrada Kelly’s debut novel, *Blackbird Fly*, was a *Kirkus* Best Book of the Year, a *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year, an ALSC Notable Book, and an Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature Honor Book. She is also the author of *The Land of Forgotten Girls*, winner of the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature; *You Go First*, an Indie Next Pick; *Lalani of the Distant Sea*, an Indie Next Pick; *Those Kids from Fawn Creek*, named to numerous best-of-the-year lists; and five popular novels for younger readers, *Maybe Maybe Marisol Rainey*; *Surely Surely Marisol Rainey*; *Only Only Marisol Rainey*; *Your Turn Marisol Rainey*; and *Felix Powell, Boy Dog*, which she also illustrated. Erin Entrada Kelly’s acclaimed nonfiction debut, *At Last She Stood*, which was awarded a Sibert Honor, tells the sweeping story of Filipino World War II guerrilla fighter Josefina Guerrero.

ALSO BY ERIN ENTRADA KELLY



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe Zuzu, including her living situation and her personality. What is her daily life like in the summer? What is her relationship with her father like? Why is her father gone most of the time? What happened to her mother? How do Beany and Zuzu end up with Snap?
2. Who are the Valleycats? Describe each one, their personalities, and Zuzu's relationship to them. Why are they called the Valleycats? What do they like to do together? Why do they go to the salvage yard? Describe the other children and teens that the Valleycats interact with.
3. What is Barren like? Why do its inhabitants call it Bright Valley? Describe the tins and why they are called that. Compare the living situations and possessions in Barren with what you learn about Bountiful and its comparative luxuries.
4. Snap identifies Stacia and Jerrod as "Middle Class" (p. 1) and Zuzu and Beany as "Lower Working Class" (p. 13). What are some other differences between the bounties and the dusties, besides the living situations and possessions? How do they compare in terms of technology, jobs, health care, safety, education, and more? Why do you think there is such a strong class system that keeps many people living in poverty? Who benefits from the system?
5. Discuss "Snap's awakening" (p. 54). How does he change? Compare how he talks before and after the awakening. In what ways would Snap, despite his strengths, like to be more human? Consider his explanation to Zuzu about how, even though robots can't usually lie, he could lie to Mr. Martinez: "I suppose I made a choice" (p.52). How does that make him more like a human being?
6. What can Snap do better than the Valleycats? How does he help them? Describe times that he makes a huge difference by helping others. Explain why Zuzu says, "He's a Valleycat now" (p. 69). How does Snap's diminishing battery life create tension in the story?
7. Zuzu's favorite adults are her father, Beany; Ms. Dagney; and Doctor Li. Describe each of the adults. Why is each one important to Zuzu? What does she admire about them? How do they deal with the hardships they face? How do they help the young people around them?
8. Discuss Ms. Dagney's feelings about robots that, "They're destroying everything in society. Art and music and everything. . ." She says "they're all bad" (pp. 11-12). Also discuss Beany's statement that, "Like it or not, robots serve a function" (p. 12). Explain both sides of the issue, using specific examples from the novel, including the description in Chapter 6 of what machines do in Bountiful.
9. What are some of the ways that the government keeps the dusties from rebelling? What role do drones serve? How are the camps arranged to keep dusties apart from each other, and why? Why is "Fluent English. . . the only permitted form of spoken communication" (pp. 90-91) for the dusties? Give examples of how the dusties feel about being spied on and controlled.
10. "Ms. Dagney says things will be different one day," Laiken says to the Valleycats (p. 57). "Do you think that's true?" How do the Valleycats respond? Which characters are working to make changes? Find examples of foreshadowing that point to possible changes in the future for the dusties. What does the final chapter, six months later, suggest might have changed?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Robots: Helpful or Harmful?

The Second Life of Snap explores the benefits and drawbacks of robots in society. Meet in small groups to brainstorm pros and cons, drawing from the novel and your own ideas. Create a list with two columns that reflect your discussion. Then discuss it with relatives and others not in your class. Meet again and add to your list. Post the lists from the small groups on a bulletin board or online to share with the class.

“Six Months Later”

The novel ends with a chapter labeled “Six Months Later.” Write a story about what might have happened to the main characters in the intervening six months, referring to the clues in the final chapter and adding material from your imagination based on what you know of the characters. Exchange chapters with other students to see what they imagined.

Trash or Treasure

Review the “Trash or Treasure” activity and stories in Chapter 13. Then bring in something small and unneeded from home that might be found in Sal, the salvage yard in the story. Put all the items on a table. Each person should choose an item, use a few minutes to create a story about it, and share the story with a small group. Voting on the best story is optional.

Class System Contrast

Create a simple chart by drawing two columns, one labeled “Barren” at the top and the other “Bountiful.” On the left, list an attribute of life in Barren, and opposite it in the other column, list the contrasting attribute in Bountiful. For example, Barren has no tech and Bountiful has tech. List at least ten differences. Bring your chart

to a classroom discussion of the injustice of such a system, relating it to the world today.

Lazy Daisy

The Valleycats don’t have many material goods, but they have fun in other ways, including the game “lazy daisy.” It’s described as: “You had to think of two words that rhymed and see if anyone could guess them” (p. 98). Ms. Dagney goes on to give more details. Following the instructions, meet in groups of four and try your hand at the game. Share other games that you know which don’t require any equipment.

Meet the Author

Who is author Erin Entrada Kelly? Learn more by starting at the Reading Rockets website where you can watch an interview with her, choosing topics of interest from the playlist. The author’s website also offers information about her and her books with links to podcasts and videos. Gather copies of her other books for everyone to look at and possibly read. Share with each other what you’ve learned about the author and her books.

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Guide prepared by Kathleen Odean, a children’s literature consultant and former chair of the Newbery Award Committee.

